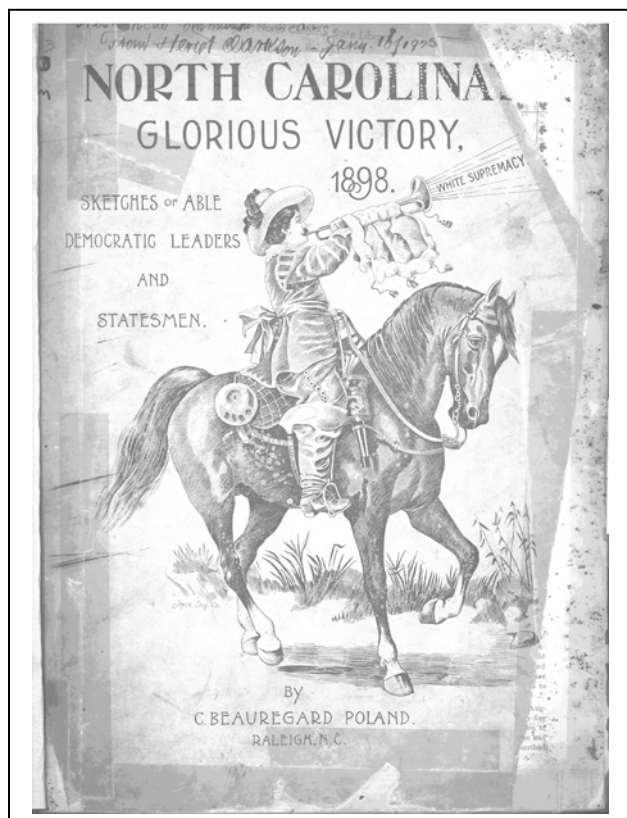


demonstration of the resources for the maintenance of order now at hand.”⁹⁴

In their sermons of Sunday, November 13, 1898 Wilmington’s white clergy, who had held sway over their congregations during the campaign, justified the campaign and violence. Prior to the riot, ministers had used their influence to achieve the leaders’ goals amongst their flocks. For example, Mike Dowling was calmed by his minister, Rev. Christopher Dennen of St. Thomas Catholic Church, who urged Dowling not to upset the schemes of leaders before the riot. T. C. James, leader in the Wilmington Light Infantry claimed that ministers of every denomination supported the efforts of men to secure the coup.⁹⁵



North Carolina's Glorious Victory, 1898

⁹⁴ *Morning Star* (Wilmington), November 12, 1898.

⁹⁵ Hayden, *WLI*, 75.

Excerpts of sermons by prominent ministers were printed in the papers the following week. The main themes were the redemption of the city, victory and duty. Greatest attention was paid to Rev. Peyton H. Hoge of the First Presbyterian Church who offered Biblical justification for the coup in a passage from Proverbs: “He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” Hoge explained that “since we last met in these walls we have taken a city.” The whites, he said, now had a responsibility to rule with deliberate, cool-headed, self control buttressed by legislation to limit black suffrage, and to do their duty to the black race through educational and spiritual uplift. Rev. A. D. McClure told his congregation that they “must now join heart and hand to secure by lawful means order out of confusion.” Rev. J. W. Kramer of the Brooklyn Baptist Church claimed that “whites were doing God’s service” and Rev. Blackwell of the First Baptist Church drew comparisons between the victory of whites over blacks in battle to the victories of angels over the devil and his “black robed angels.” Additional special services for the soldiers were held on Sunday afternoon at the armory.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Hoge was quoted as saying the “process” of the preceding week was an “act of stern necessity.” The prominence given to Hoge’s sermon in the newspapers prompted historian Leon Prather to use Hoge’s Biblical quote—“we have taken a city”—for his in-depth book on the coup and violence. Black ministers and lay people “consulted” with white authorities to ensure that their services wouldn’t be interrupted, and they were encouraged to counsel moderation to their congregations. It is unclear if the sermons given in the black churches were monitored or scripted by whites but all contain similar strains of language, mainly that of accommodation and submission to white domination. *Evening Dispatch* (Wilmington), November 15, 1898; *Wilmington Messenger*, November 15, 1898.